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Message Text

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42
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---------- 101236
R 271437Z DEC 73
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, UR, US
SUBJECT: PRESS STORIES ON VOA RUSSIAN PROGRAMMING

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT DEPARTMENT CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE ON NEW YORK TIMES AND AP STORIES:

QUOTE: QUESTION: THERE ARE PRESS REPORTS THAT SOVIET DISSIDENTS FEEL THAT SOME SORT OF AGREEMENT WAS REACHED BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE SOVIETS ON VOA--I.E., THAT IN RETURN FOR CESSATION OF JAMMING, THE "ANTI-SOVIET" CONTENT OF VOA PROGRAMS WOULD BE TONED DOWN; ALSO THAT VOA WOULD QUIETLY CEASE TRANSMITTING ON AT LEAST ONE FREQUENCY. IS THERE SUBSTANCE TO THE DISSIDENTS' VIEWS?

ANSWER: THERE HAS NOT BEEN ANY SORT OF AGREEMENT, FORMAL OR INFORMAL, BETWEEN OURSELVES AND THE SOVIETS ON THE CONTENT OF VOA BROADCASTS. I STATE THAT CATEGORICALLY, AND ANY ASSERTION OR BELIEF TO THE CONTRARY IS WITHOUT ANY FOUNDATION IN FACT. LAST SEPTEMBER THE SOVIETS CEASED JAMMING VOA WITHOUT OUR FOREKNOWLEDGE AND WITHOUT
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EXPLANATION. WE, OF COURSE, WELCOME THE SOVIET DECISION

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TO CEASE THE JAMMING. SINCE THE FORMAT OF VOA BROADCASTS HAD BEEN PREDICATED ON THE KNOWLEDGE THAT VOA WAS JAMMED AND THAT SOME PROGRAMS, PARTICULARLY NEWS, DID

NOT ALWAYS GET THROUGH, THESE PROGRAMS WERE REPEATED, SOMETIMES MORE THAN ONCE, IN AN EFFORT TO GET THROUGH THE JAMMING. IN THE ABSENCE OF JAMMING THIS REPETITION IS NOT NECESSARY.

IN VIEW OF THE CESSATION OF JAMMING, VOA INSTITUTED CERTAIN OTHER CHANGES IN PROGRAMMING -- BUT NOT IN CONTENT -- IN ORDER TO APPEAL TO THE POTENTIALLY WIDER AUDIENCES THAT ABSENCE OF JAMMING MADE POSSIBLE. FOR ANY WHO ARE INTERESTED, DETAILS OF THESE CHANGES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE FORM OF VOA PROGRAM SCHEDULES, CURRENT AND EARLIER ONES.

IN REGARD TO FREQUENCIES, VOA ON NOVEMBER 12 DID DROP ONE FREQUENCY WHICH IN THE ABSENCE OF JAMMING IS NOT NEEDED. A GENERAL CHANGE IN FREQUENCIES ON WHICH VOA BROADCASTS MAY HAVE BEEN NOTICED, BUT THIS IS SEASONAL, DUE TO ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS; VOA FREQUENCIES WILL SHIFT AGAIN FOR THE SAME REASON ON THE FIRST SUNDAY IN FEBRUARY. UNQUOTE

2. NO QUESTION WAS ASKED AT DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING DECEMBER 26. JOE POLAKOFF OF JEWISH TELEGRAPH AGENCY QUERIED USIA SPOKESMAN WHO RESPONDED ALONG LINES PRESS GUIDANCE. COPY OF NYT STORY POUCHED TO EMBASSY. KISSINGER

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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Disposition Reason:
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: MJERABEK:SS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
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